10-24-2015

Faculty Recital: Walking with My Ancestors

Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum, Playwright/Composer/Choreographer

Kim Pereira, Director

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Thinking about shackled able-bodied Africans lingering in darkness. Waiting. Gaps!! Cry-y-y-y-y-y-y….

We continue to relive the experiences at Elmina Castle. Families torn. Incarceration. Policing black bodies. Single mothers. Orphans. Emptiness inside. Gaps. By disrupting our understanding of the status quo and giving voice to previously unheard narratives, a most important but neglected past that still defines who we are and how we interact with each other, *Walking With My Ancestors* offers important perspective on slavery in its connection to today’s racial problems.

In the aftermaths of Charleston, Ferguson, and Baltimore, *Walking With My Ancestors* compels us to deepen dialogue and engagement needed to address racial violence, and encourages us to rethink how much has changed, or not, in race relations/policies, and helping us to move towards healing. Who we are, our shared past, and our responsibility for each other resonate in this project. *Ati deka metuna ð™ ø—“One stick cannot build a house.”

Ghanaians say, *Twene da hçø a ye nhçø nkyen… “You don’t play the side of a drum when it has a drumhead.” Therefore, with African oratory skills, griot style, and candor, the play is direct—weaving proverbs and storytelling.*

*Walking With My Ancestors* is about the experiences of the forgotten Africans who lingered and died in the dungeons before crossing the Great Atlantic, *Nana Bosompo*.

Please *listen* to their story. *Listen* to the pain and moans.

Join us as we Walk with the Ancestors, Connect with their greatness and resilience, Thank them, and Lay their restless souls to rest. Help us to declare: “Forgive Us! Thank You! Rest in Peace!” *Damirijua Dia. Dia ne Amankuru! Ye sre Nyame na mo. Otweadeamp;zn nbyira mo. Mo nnante yie. Mo nnante nkuma nkuma. Gò mu bëbrë, bëbrë, bëbrë, bëbrë, bëbrë. Bëbrë, Bëbrë, Bëbrë. Bëbrë….*

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Illinois State University  
College of Fine Arts  
School of Music

**Charles W. Bolen Faculty Recital Series**  
Empowering Creativity, Deepening Dialogue, Engaging Community

**Walking With My Ancestors**  
Saturday, October 24, 2015 at 8:00 p.m.  
Sunday, October 25, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

This is the thirty-eighth program of the 2015-2016 season.

Ama Oforiwaaduonum, Playwright/Composer/Choreographer  
Kim Pereira, Director

Kemp Recital Hall

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Program

Please turn off electronic devices for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

I Walking With my Ancestors (2014) Ama Oforiwa Aduonum

II A Talk Back

III Audience Participation

Walking With My Ancestors
By Ama Oforiwa Aduonum

Cast (in alphabetical order)
Ama Oforiwa Aduonum (Endurance) Ancestral Spirit, Door of No Return, Descendant
Leola Bellamy (Healer) Ancestral Spirit, Women’s Dungeon, Descendant
Fania Bourn (Love and Compassion) Ancestral Spirit, Door of No Return, Descendant
John Bowen (Governor) Ancestral Spirit, Elmina Castle, Branding Iron, Descendant
Jajwanica Johnson (Hope) Ancestral Spirit, Door of No Return, Hope, Descendant
Tereva Parham (Faith) Ancestral Spirit, Door of No Return, Descendant
Claron Sharrieff (Peace) Ancestral Spirit, Door of No Return, Descendant

Understudy: Jennifer Rusk

Composer and Musician: Dr. Kwasi Aduonum

The Production Staff
Ama Oforiwa Aduonum, Playwright and Choreographer
Kim Pereira, Director

Karla Bailey-Smith, Set Designer
China Hawkins, Costume Designer
Rachel Hettrick, Stage Manager, Technical Director
Archana Shekara, Graphic Artist

Special Thanks
School of Music, MECCPACC, Oh! Nii, Paul Ankomah,

Musical Selections
Illinois Drum Call
The Doors of No Return
Abibiiman Abuwe ase
Edna Banyiwa
Kekere Kekere
Elmina Castle
African Woman
I Want Free
Tuu Tuu Gbovi
Ogya ee Ogya ee
Healing Song
Asomdwoe Mu

Ama Oforiwa Aduonum
Dr. Kwasi Aduonum
Ama Oforiwa Aduonum
Ama Oforiwa Aduonum
Oh! Nii Sowah
Ama Oforiwa Aduonum
Ama Oforiwa Aduonum
Ama Oforiwa Aduonum
Ghanaian Ewe Lullaby
Ghanaian Fante Warrior Song
Ama Oforiwa Aduonum
Dr. Ephraim Ama

PLAYWRIGHTS’S NOTE
About the play
Walking With My Ancestors is an original play based on my research and professional/personal experiences as a Ghanaian woman. The research was conducted at former slave-holding dungeons—the tombs and wombs in which proud Africans were buried and reborn as slaves—at Elmina, Ghana.

The play grew out of the interest and need to educate because people of all nationalities are unaware that before shipment to plantations in the Americas, captured Africans were imprisoned for months in dungeons. Helping us to reflect on the history, the loss, and human suffering associated with that history, and transforming those experiences into positive power, action, healing.